Rhayader Rural District Council

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year 1963

Members of the Council Year 1963

Chairman: Alderman E. T. KINSEY MORGAN, J.P.

Vice-Chairman: R. P. L. HUGHES, C.C.

Councillors:

Abbeycwmhir: F. P. Hamer, A. R. Lewis Cefnllys Rural: J. T. L. Price

Llanbadarn Fawr: I. J. Lewis, R. T. Knill, C.C.

Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr:

Maj. Gen. R. S. Lewis, C.B., O.B.E., V. Lewis W. Scott, J.P., J. D. Williams

Llanyre: S. E. Lloyd, W. A. Probert

Nantmel: R. E. P. Jones, A. E. Oakley, I. Thomas Rhayader: R. P. L. Hughes, C.C., G. D. Morgan, C.C. St. Harmon: D. H. Bound, Ald. E. T. K. Morgan, J.P.

Committees:

Public Health and Housing: All members of the Council Chairman: G. D. Morgan Vice-Chairman: V. Lewis

Finance and Rating: All members of the Council Chairman: Maj. Gen. R. S. Lewis, C.B., O.B.E.

Vice-Chairman: J. T. L. Price

Medical Officer of Health:

JOHN DAVIES, M.B., B.Ch., B.Sc.

(Medical Practitioner and Part-time M.O.H.)

Telephone: Rhayader 31

Public Health Inspector:
G. H. ROBERTS, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.
(Certs. S.I.E.J.B. and Meat and Foods of R.S.H.)

Council Offices:

Dolgerddon Hall, Rhayader. Telephone: Rhayader 9

BRYNCOED,
RHAYADER.
1st December, 1964

To the Chairman and Members, Rhayader Rural District Council

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Sirs,

I have the honour to present to you the Annual Report for 1963.

The year was exceptional for the severity of the winter with its consequent hardship on the older people. The community as a whole should be alive to the harmful and dangerous effects of prolonged exposure to extreme cold on the young as well as the elderly. We should be mindful of the fact that some of the latter will neglect nutritional requirements to provide extra warmth during cold weather.

The introduction of a limited meals on wheels service contributes a little to the alleviation of this problem, and I hope that it can be extended. This service is greatly appreciated by those who participate.

Too often a false sense of poverty in the old determines a needlessly spartan existence.

Much of the catering for the old will be solved by the Council's provision of group bungalows in 1965 and the County Council's Part III accommodation in the town.

These and the completion of the new housing scheme will provide you with the opportunity of removing some, if not all, of the Category V houses.

No one will regret the closing of some of the older cottages whose low rent and small size are their only attractions. These in no way compensate for poor insulation and ventilation, inadequate light and an outside toilet which has to be shared. Fortunately their numbers are few.

There were no major outbreaks of illness during 1963 and the general health of the community remained satisfactory.

I wish to thank you and the members of the Council's staff for your help, and the Public Health Inspector for his work throughout the year and for the preparation of this report.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN DAVIES.

GENERAL STATISTICS

						19 6 2	1963
Area of District			• • •		• • •	91,240	acres
Estimated Popular	tion					4,060	
Number of Inhabi			_				
In Parishes							
Abbeycwmhir						71	71
Cefnllys Rura	1					26	26
Llanbadarn F	awr					152	151
Llanfihangel I	Helygen					14	14
Llansantffraid	Cwmd	euddy	wr			163	157
Llanyre (Rura	al Ward)				80	80
Llanyre (Villa	ge War	d)				129	129
Nantmel		•••	4			204	201
Rhayader						348	342
St. Harmon			• • •			136	135
					_	1,323	1,306
Total includes seven residential caravans							
Rateable Value					£8	5,373 f	169,620
Product of a Penn	y Rate.					£350~	

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The clean atmosphere, open spaces and tempo of life in what is still an unspoiled area is proving more and more attractive to people from crowded towns. There is a demand for houses for week-end use, with a view to possible retirement.

This trend has had several side effects; in housing, which has increased in value because of demand; in the population itself, for it tends to load the higher age groups.

Obviously the advantages of the district outweigh the disadvantages of a rainfall higher than the national average. Rainfall figures are as follows:—

	Kew 19 63	Rhayader 19 6 3
January	 1.4 ins	0.97 ins.
February	 $\dots 0.2$,,	1.56 ,,
March	 2.3 ,,	6.87 ,,
April	2.1 ,,	4.66 ,,
May	1.3 ,,	3.50 ,,
June	 1.7 ,,	3.65 ,;

July	2.0 ,,	1.26 ,,
August	1.7 ,,	3.09 ,,
September	2.3 ,,	3.38 ,,
October	1.8 ,,	2.15 ,,
November	4.2 ,,	9.22
December	0.6 ,,	1.03 ,,
		Married Married Married
Totals	21.6 ins.	41. 34 ins.

Rainfall in 1963 expressed as a percentage of long average, i.e. 1963—1950—84.8%

The national average is generally taken as 30 inches

HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

The district is served by a part time Medical Officer of Health, a Surveyor and Water Engineer and a Public Health Inspector. A Rodent Operative is shared with Knighton Rural District Council.

Bacteriological analyses of water are undertaken by the Public Health Service, Shrewsbury, and chemical analyses by the Public Analyst, Carmarthen.

Infant Welfare Clinics are held monthly at Rhayader and Newbridge-on-Wye.

There are hospital outpatient facilities at Llandrindod Wells, Llanidloes, Hereford, Aberystwyth, Shrewsbury and at hospitals farther afield.

The Nursing Services are administered by the Radnorshire County Council. At present there are four nurses resident in the district, the rest of the area is covered from outside. The service has been augmented by the appointment of a Health Visitor who specialises in the welfare of the old and young.

Ambulance Services are provided by the Local St. John's Voluntary Service. This arrangement works well and avoids the inevitable delays which would arise from a central service in such a sparsely populated area where distance and lack of local knowledge might prove to be unsuperable obstacles.

VITAL STATISTICS

The value of statistics is that they can be taken as some measure of the 'healthiness' of an area or underline some weakness in public health. Unfortunately too much credence can not be given where the population is very low, thus if the deaths from accidents increase by one then the rate goes up 50%. This is patently absurd, but by studying the figures for a number of years then a picture can be formed.

The new style of recording statistics are an improvement as they are now broken up clearly into age groups. It is therefore interesting to note that the group with the highest death rate is the last one—over 75 years. Perhaps this is a justification of the area as a place to retire to.

Live Births					1962	1963
Male—legitimate					29	28
—illigitima t e	•••	• • •	•••	•••	1	_
P 1 1 14 4		Tot			30	28
Female—legitimate —illigitimate	• • •			• •	$\frac{26}{3}$	35
migrimate	• • •	•••	•••	•••		
		Tot	tal	• • •	29	35
		Tota	alc		 59	6 3
Rate per 1,000 Popula	tion (c				6.51	18.09
Rate for England and				1	18.1	10.09
Illegitimate Live Births		`	,			
Per cent of total live	births			6	5.8%	Nil
Still Births						
Male—legitimate					1	1
illegitimate					Nil	Nil
Female—legitimate					Nil	Nil
—illegitimate	• • •	•••	• • •	•••	Nil	Nll
		To	otal		1	1
Rate per 1,000 total l	ive & s				16.63	15.6
Rate for England and					17.3	

This still birth rate is a case in point of the unreliability of statistics involving small populations, since one more would have doubled the rate. However, taking the totals of the past fifteen years, these are:—

	Still Births	Total (Still & Live)	Rate per 1,000
19 6 3	1	64	15.6
1959-1963	12	327	36.7
1954-1958	6	314	19.13
1949-195 3	12	316	37.9
1 9 49-19 6 3	30	957	31.3

In view of these figures, there seems to be little doubt that the number of still births in this area is higher than the national average.

Males—legitimate Still Live Total 1 28 29
Females –legitimate — 35 35 — illegitimate — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
Totals 1 63 64 Infant Deaths
Infant Deaths
Under:
one year 4 weeks 1 week
Males—legitimate l l l
-illegitimate
Females—legitimate — — —
—illegitimate —
Totals 1 1 1
Legitimate infant deaths per 1,000 legitimate births 15.9 Illegitimate infant deaths per 1,000 illegitimate births Ni Neo Natal Mortality Rate Deaths under four weeks per 1,000 live births 15.9 Early Neo Natal Mortality Rate Deaths under one week per 1,000 live births 15.9
Perinatal Mortality Rate Still Births and deaths under one week combined per
1,000 live and still births 31.8
Maternal Mortality Ni
Births and Deaths compared
Births Rate per 1,000 Population (Corrected) 1963 63 25.88 18.2 Average over ten years — 19.37 16.56
Deaths Rate per 1,000 Rate for population (Corrected) England & Wale
1963 46 10.60 12.2
Average over ten years 12.1 11.7

If it were necessary to prove depopulation, the following figures would be most useful. In the past fifteen years the natural increase, that is the excess births over deaths, is 93, but in the same time the population has fallen by 658, a total decrease of 751 to the present figure of 4,040.

Each year it seems that the position must stabilise itself and as a hope for the future it remains to be seen what is the effect of the infusion of new small industries into the district.

Causes of Death

	Ma	le Female
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	4	2
Vascular lesions of nervous system	1	4
Coronary disease, angina	9	_
Hypertension with heart disease	1	1
Other heart disease	1	2
Other circulatory disease	5	1
Pneumonia	4	. 1
Bronchitis	2	1
Other defined and ill defined diseases	2	2
All other accidents		2
Suicide	1	
Total deaths all causes	30	16
Total doubles all causes		10

As for the past few years nil returns from diseases are not listed, thus the omissions are as interesting as the figures shown. In this connection there are no deaths from lung cancer.

In the campaign against cigarette smoking, lectures are given in the schools. However, it seems that this can have only limited success against the wealth and experience of commerce. Perhaps, like so many other aspects of young peoples's discipline, too much is left to other persons, schools, police, etc., and not enough done by precept in the home.

Infectious Diseases

There were no epidemics of infectious diseases during the year, and notifications were as follows:—

Pneumonia ... 7 Erysipelas ... 1

Tuberculosis

No. of cases notified (n	on pu	lmonar	y)		Male 2	Female
No. of cases on Registe	er					
Pulmonary					4	3
Non-Pulmonary	• • •			•••	5	3
			Tot	al	9	6

The number of cases still on the register are half those of ten years ago. Tuberculosis no longer involves the fear and dread it once did. Modern medicine has provided the cure, but it should not be overlooked that on the preventative side the improvement in housing and higher standards of living have played their parts.

National Assistance Act, 1948—Section 47

This Section of the Act gives power to remove persons who

are in need of care and attention to institutions.

No action was necessary during the year.

Housing

Human nature being what it is, the desire to keep up with the neighbours is marked in housing improvements. The upgrading or modernisation of one house or farm in one area is often followed by inquiries from adjacent premises.

There is no doubt that the relaxation of "red tape" in the Standard Grant Scheme has meant greater interest but some possible schemes are being held up because of the lack of appreciation of the higher costs in rural areas. Apart from higher drainage costs no regard seems to have been taken of higher transport costs, an overloaded building trade and weather hazards. Still. progress is being made, albeit slowly.

Since the original report on Rural Housing in 1959 the position is approximately as in the following:—

Parish		ades			Total	
	1	2	3	4	5	
Abbeycwmhir	1	1				
1959	13	3	28	22	7	73
1963	24	2	24	19	2	71
Cefnllys Rural						
1959	4	1	8	7	7	27
1963	9		6	8	3	23
Llanbadarn Fawr						
1959	58	2	51	25	20	156
1963	63	$\frac{1}{3}$	46	28	14	154
Llanfihangel Helygen						
1959	2		8	4	1	15
1963	$\frac{2}{2}$		8	4		14
Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr						
1959	86	1	46	27	21	181
1963	98	1	36	29	8	172
Llanyre						
1959	77	4	85	44	8	218
1963	93	7	74	41		215
Nantmel				-		
1959	43	10	86	51	30	220
1963	59	6	83	48	10	206
Rhayader			-00			
1959	189	10	68	40	35	342
1963	219	5	70	26	27	347
	219		70			
St. Harmon	07	,	7.	36	0	1.40
1959	27	1	71		8	143
1963	40	2	61	36	4	143
Totals and Percentages	100			050		1 055
1959	499	32	451	256	137	1,375
	36%	2%	33%	19%	10%	
1062	607	26	408	239	68	1,348
1963						1,348
	45%	2%	30%	18%	5%	

It will be seen from this that the number of Grade 1 Houses has increased by 108 in four years, or expressed in percentages from 36 to 45%.

Since, however, most houses with bathrooms are in Grade 1, this means that over half the houses in the district are still without baths. It is hoped that, in an age and area where the car is regarded as essential, the means to personal hygiene shall not be considered a luxury.

In the same context, it will be seen from the following table that over a third of the population are still content with buckets, etc. Especially bad is Nantmel Parish where the principal method is a frame over the brook—a method much favoured by the Romans.

Sewerage

Parish	Column	1	2	3	4	5		
Abbeycwmhir .			23	48	71			
Cefnllys Rural .			9	17	26	_		
Llanbadarnfawr.	••	54	3 9	61	154	18 new houses		
Llanfihangel Hely			2	12	14			
Llans'tffraid Cwn	ndeudwr	92	37	43	172			
Llanyre	***	124	35	56	215	24 plus 14 new		
Nantmel	•••	5	67	134	206	_		
Rhayader		338	3	6	347	6 plus 48 new		
St. Harmon .		2	36	105	143	12 plus 6 new		
		615	251	482	1348	128		
46%18%36%								

Col. 1 is the number of houses with W.C's to main sewer

Col. 2 is the number of houses with W.C's to private disposal plants—almost entirely to the Council's 'standard design''

Col. 3 includes pails, middens and closets over brooks and streams etc.

Col. 4 are the totals

Col. 5 the number of existing and proposed new houses likely to be sewered in the foreseeable future

There are modern Council Plants at Rhayader, Crossgates and Newbridge-on-Wye. The Pantydwr scheme is now in progress and work is likely to start in the New Year on Llanyre. There are small plants for the Council Houses at Dolau, Seven Stars and Brynicholas.

Meat Inspection

In March, 1962, the slaughterhouse had reverted to private use but, failing to be brought up to the new standards, this was finally closed in March, 1963.

From the beginning of the year until its closure, some sixtyone visits were made for meat inspection. Killings had been small up until then and meat is now bought off the hook from Llandrindod Wells, Llanidloes, Builth Wells and farther afield.

There were no cases of cysticercosis or of tuberculosis during this time.

Other Foods

Numbers and types of food premises in the district are:-

* *	-		
Grocers			 39
Butchers		• • •	 5
Public Houses			 22
Hotels			20
Cafes, Restaurants			 3
School canteens			 10
			99

Not all the public houses are yet up to the standard demanded for toilets. With the aid of the licensing justices it is to be hoped that all will be persuaded to remedy this state of affairs.

Destruction of Rats and Mice

A rodent operator is shared between Rhayader and Knighton Rural District Councils. This works out on an average of eighteen weeks annually in each district.

The bulk of the infestations occur on farms as is natural in such an agricultural community. The service seems to be welcomed by occupiers and no difficulty has been encountered, in fact most treatments are arranged on a direct request.

So far there has been no case of warfarin resistance. I feel that this could be one result of good relations, for very few people do treatments themselves.

A number of different bait bases are used for specialised applications, but in the main, wheat meal is predominantly used in an effort to reduce costs.

Water Supplies

All water undertakings are owned by the Council and are under the control of the Surveyor and Water Engineer.

There are eleven separate works, seven of which are treated with chlorine before distribution. All the supplies are plumbo solvent but little or no lead pipes are used, nearly all services

being in copper and recently in alkathene.

The results of the ten bacteriological samples taken during the year are as follows:—

Supply	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	,	Remarks
Abbeycwmhir	 1	_	Partia	ally treated
, and the second			inadeo	
Bwlchysarnau	 eryn	1	Untre	ated
Pantydwr	 1	_	Fully	treated
Penybont	 1	-	,,	,,
Rhayader	 6	6	,,	,,
		_		
	9	9		

The Council are by no means satisfied with their water supplies and distribution, and plans are suggested for a new supply for Newbridge-on-Wye and Llanyre, Gautron and Nantmel with extensions at Crossgates and improvements for Rhayader.

As there have no major changes in distribution during the year, the number of houses supplied will be affected only by private improvements and the approximate figures are as below:—

Parish		No. of	Public Mains		Private Sources	
		Houses	Piped	St'dpipes	Piped	★ Carrie
Abbeycwmhir		72	20	_	33	19
Cefnllys Rural		26	i —		14	12
Llanbadarnfawr		154	101	4	25	24
Llanfihangel Helygen		14	8		2	4
Llans'ffraed Cwmdauddy	vr	173	93	8	44	28
Llanyre		215	160	4	32	19
Nantmel		206	67	3	64	72
Rhayader		348	313	33		_
St. Harmon		143	50	1	52	40
Total		1,251	811	55	26 6	218
Percentages			6 0%	4%	2 0%	16%
Includes hand pumped supplies						

Refuse Collection

Collection is made as follows:-

Rhayader, Cwmdauddwr and Elan Valley—twice weekly Newbridge-on-Wye, Doldowlod, Llanyre, Crossgates, Penybont and Nantmel—weekly

St. Harmon, Pantydwr, Nantmel, Bwlchysarnau, Abbeycwmhir, Llangurig Road and Tylwch—fortnightly

Public Cemetery

Of the forty-six deaths in the year, five were buried in the Council's public cemetery.

Public Conveniences

The Council have public conveniences at Rhayader, Cwm-dauddwr and the Cemetery, whiist the Birmingham Corporation have three conveniences in the area of the lakes.

Public Swimming Pools

There is a small pool for infants in use in the Waun Capel park. It has an improvised chlorination plant but it would be more effective if it were allowed to pump and function without stop throughout the warmer months.

Factories

	Numgber	Number			
Premises (1)	Ou Register	Inspections (3)	Written Notices (4)	Occupiers prosecuted (5)	
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	1	_	_	_	
(ii) Factories not included in (i) which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	23	8	 -		
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)					
Total	24	8			

Particulars	Numger in which defects were found				No. of cases	
(x)	Found (2)	Remedied	To H.M.	By H.M. Inspector	prosecutions were instituted	
Want of cleanliness (S.1) Overcrowding (S.2) Unreasonable temperature (S.3) Inadequate ventilation (S.4) Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6) Sanitary Conv'ences (S.7) (a) Insufficient (b) Unsuitable or defective (c) Not separate for sexes Other offences against the Act not including offences relating to Outwork)	1		(4)	1	(0)	
Total	1			1		

Public Health Inspections

An approximation of visits made during the years are as follows:—

Rehousing		• • •			 65
Slum Clearance	e	• • •			 12
Old people's v	velfare				 2
Improvements	5				
Ĥill Farmin	g			• • •	 39
Discretionar		ıts			 58
Standard G	rants				 99
Public Health	Act-				
sewer conne	ctions				 8
drainage					 22
defects					 22
animals	• • •		• • •		 5 '
insects					 4
rodents					 10
others		• • •			 2

Infectious diseases	• • •	• • •	10
Caravan and camping site	•••	•••	45
Caravan Sites—private			23
Water supplies—public		• • •	82
—private			18
Factories		• • •	8
Petroleum Acts			3
Swimming Pools			в
Food—meat inspection			61
butchers	•••		· 19
bakehouses			6
grocers			3
public houses			25
cafes, etc			3
Miscellaneous	•••		23
Refuse	•••		90
Conveniences		•••	42
		Ta	La1 015

Total 815

Other Matters

An interesting diversion during the year was that of obtaining foxes caught by the local pack for research into the incidence of hydatids. This was undertaken by a specialist operating from the slaughterhouse at Builth Wells.

